

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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USMISSION EC BRUSSELS

USMISSION NATO

AMEMBASSY DUBLIN

AMEMBASSY HELSINKI

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY LUXEMBOURG

AMEMBASSY OSLO

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY REYKJAVIK

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

C O N F I D E N T I A L COPENHAGEN 0386

E.O. 11652 GDS

TAGS: PINT, DA

SUBJECT: GOVERNMENT FORMATION NO 8 POUL HARTLING'S
MINORITY GOVERNMENT HITS A SNAG

REF: COPENHAGEN 0369

1. WITHIN ONE HOUR OF THE SCHEDULED PRESENTATION OF HIS
NEW CABINET TO THE QUEEN, ACTING PRIME MINISTER POUL
HARTLING RAN INTO DIFFICULTY IN FORMING HIS MINORITY
COALITION GOVERNMENT. THE PROBLEM IS AN UNPRECEDENTED
CONSTITUTIONAL ONE WHICH DEVELOPED LATE LAST NIGHT
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(FEB 10) WHEN MOGENS GLISTRUP PUBLICLY STATED THAT HIS

PROGRESS PARTY WOULD NOT SUPPORT THE MINORITY GOVERNMENT HARLING WAS ABOUT TO ESTABLISH. GLISTRUP HIMSELF POINTED OUT THAT IT WOULD THEREAFTER BE UNCONSTITUTIONAL FOR HARTLING TO PRESENT A GOVERNMENT TO THE QUEEN, SINCE THERE EXISTED A CLEAR, DECLARED PARLIAMENTARY MAJORITY AGAINST THE GOVERNMENT. IN EFFECT, GLISTRUP WAS DRAWING A DISTINCTION BETWEEN HIS SUPPORT FOR HARTLING AS FORMATEUR (WHICH GLISTRUP HAD EXTENDED) AND SUPPORT FOR THE GOVERNMENT WHICH HARTLING SUCCEEDED IN PUTTING TOGETHER. GLISTRUP'S MOTIVE IS CLEAR: HE WANTS EITHER TO PARTICIPATE IN THAT GOVERNMENT OR TO OBTAIN A FORMAL AND PUBLIC UNDERSTANDING ACKNOWLEDGING ITS DEPENDENCE ON PROGRESS PARTY SUPPORT.

2. WHEN REFERRED TO CONSTITUTIONAL EXPERTS FEB 11, GLISTRUP'S INTERPRETATION WAS UPHELD. THE EXPERT'S RULED THAT A MINORITY GOVERNMENT COULD CONTINUE IN OFFICE AFTER IT HAD LOST MAJORITY SUPPORT (ON THE GROUNDS THAT THE OPPOSITION MUST DEMONSTRATE IN SUCH CASE THAT IT IS IN MAJORITY), BUT THAT SUCH A MINORITY GOVERNMENT COULD NOT BE INITIALLY CONSTITUTED. IN THE LATTER INSTANCE, THE BURDEN OF PROOF LAY WITH THE PRIME MINISTER-DESIGNATE TO PROVIDE ASSURANCE THAT HIS PROPOSED GOVERNMENT WOULD NOT BE IMMEDIATELY OVERTHROWN.

3. SINCE THE RADICAL PARTY HAD ALREADY PUBLICLY STATED THAT IT WOULD NOT PRESENT A NO-CONFIDENCE MOTION AGAINST EITHER A SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC OR LIBERAL-LED MINORITY GOVERNMENT, HARTLING COULD COUNT ON 78 VOTES (HIS OWN COALITION'S 65 AND THE RADICALS' 13) 10 OR 11 SHORT OF A MAJORITY. HARTLING THEREUPON CALLED IN SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC PARTY LEADER ANKER JORGENSEN AND REQUESTED WRITTEN ASSURANCE THAT THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATS WOULD ACT AS A "LOYAL OPPOSITION" SIMILAR TO THE RADICALS. THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC NEGOTIATING TEAM REFUSED ON THE ARGUMENT THAT HARTLING SHOULD INSTEAD SEEK BACKING FROM THE PARTIES THAT HAD SUPPORTED HIM AS FORMATEUR (THAT IS FROM GLISTRUP'S PROGRESSIVES)

4. SINCE THE FOUR PROSPECTIVE COALITION PARTIES WOULD NOT AGREE TO GLISTRUP'S DEMANDS HARTLING INFORMED THE

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QUEEN TODAY THAT HE WAS UNABLE TO FORM A GOVERNMENT A NEW ROUND OF CONSULTATIONS WITH PARTY LEADERS IS SCHEDULED TONIGHT.
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